



STATE OF MISSISSIPPI
PHIL BRYANT, GOVERNOR

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
GARY C. RIKARD, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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Contact: Robbie Wilbur
601/961-5277

Mississippi Identifies Priorities for Initial Funding from RESTORE Bucket Two

(JACKSON, Miss.) -- The Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) today announced the restoration priorities set forth in the state's Bucket Two proposal that will be submitted to the RESTORE Council Monday, November 17, as part of the Council's first "funded priority list."

Mississippi has partnered with a number of other Council members to submit three initiatives. If funded, the projects could create thousands of additional acres of conserved lands across the Gulf region, establish the state's first Mississippi Sound Estuarine Program, and streamline environmental program activity in the future through coordinated efforts around the availability of beneficial use materials.

The Council's first "funded priority list" will likely spend approximately \$160 to \$180 million throughout the Gulf region out of the settlement from the Transocean Deepwater, Inc. and related entities to fund the Council-Selected Restoration Component (Bucket Two) projects.

"I am excited to provide this preliminary information on our state's plans with regard to Bucket Two and look forward to releasing full detail on our three proposals in the next two to three weeks," said Gary Rikard, MDEQ Executive Director. "Mississippi's coastal residents have played a vital role in shaping our submissions. These restoration priorities are responsive to the feedback we have received for the last two years, and they are reflective of the clear priorities represented by the over 500 projects which have been received through our project submission portal at www.restore.ms."

Briefly described, the state's three proposals include:

1. A coordinated multi-state strategy for land protection, conservation and enhancement of priority lands across the Gulf.
2. Creation of a Mississippi Sound Estuarine Program (MSEP) which will provide a structured network of scientists, citizens, and communities to focus on policy matters important to Mississippi's environment.
3. Coordination of a federal/state joint initiative to fund planning, engineering and design, and permitting of beneficial use materials and sites in an effort to expedite activities around readiness for large scale environmental project work to come in the coming months and years.

“In preparing these submissions our state has focused heavily on the announced goal of RESTORE Bucket Two which is to fund restoration projects and programs that contribute to the comprehensive restoration of the Gulf ecosystem, and we have worked hard to secure partners across the Gulf,” said Rikard.

The state's proposals will be formally submitted on Monday after which the Restore Council will conduct an initial eligibility review, a process which is anticipated to take approximately two weeks. As soon as the submissions are deemed eligible, full proposals will be available for download at www.restore.ms.